

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

- LETTER TO COMMISSION

LTC #143-2013

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy Morales, City Manager

DATE: April 25, 2013

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO COMMENTS MADE REFERENCE LIFEGUARD COVERAGE

BETWEEN 53RD STREET AND 64TH SREET ON THE BEACH

The Miami Beach Fire Department, Ocean Rescue Division is committed to providing excellent public service and safety to all who live, work and play in our vibrant, tropical, historic community. The Ocean Rescue Division supports the cities vision by working to keep Miami Beach cleaner and safer through the staffing of 29 lifeguard towers that maintain coverage of our designated publically accessible beaches. Past practice for determining the placement of towers relied on the following criteria:

1. Proximity of city parking lots and parks.

- 2. Beach usage as documented by counts done by the lifeguards.
- 3. Historical knowledge of incidents, rescues, medical calls and fatalities.
- 4. Water conditions, beach topography and visibility.
- 5. Factors associated with special events and beach concession operations which increase usage and activity are also taken into account

Ocean Rescue currently uses the national standard flag system that warns the public 365 days a year. Flags are posted at all lifeguard towers, warning bathers of potential danger including rip currents, lightning, high surf, and dangerous marine life. Weather conditions are published through our Miami Beach website, which is updated daily. Weather conditions and flag warnings are updated daily as well on Florida International University's web page: beach.fiu.edu through a collaborative effort between Ocean Rescue operations and FIU. Lifeguards diligently warn bathers with approximately 251,350 preventions and rescued 531 victims last year. Ocean Rescue warned approximately 10,733 bathers in unguarded areas. On the day of the rescue performed by Mr. Pearl there were 248 rescues and 76 enforcements in the zone supervised by the zone lieutenant. The table below shows two fatalities between 53rd and 64th street that occurred in the past year. Ocean Rescue responded to the unguarded areas, and administered CPR to both victims. They both died from a medical condition and not from saltwater emersion as both victims were seen collapsing from a standing position at or near the shoreline and immediately assisted by witnesses.

56th Street	Sunday, August 19, 2012	3:30PM	Hypertensive and Atherosclerotic Heart Disease - Natural Causes
58th Street	Wednesday, July 04, 2012	2:00PM	Hypertensive and Atherosclerotic Heart Disease- Natural Causes

In addition to the current practice of patrolling unguarded areas and warning patrons to relocate to a guarded area, the Ocean Rescue Division will research the availability of portable highly visible signs that can be used to provide further warning and instruction in areas that develop rip tides.

There are currently nine rope lines maintained by Ocean Rescue at the following locations:

- 1. 3rd street
- 2. 6th street
- 3. 10th street
- 4. 13th street
- 5. 17th^t street
- 6. 35th street
- 7. 72nd street
- 8. 80th street
- 9. 86th street (currently out of service to sand shifting)

Should you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

JLM/JO